



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF  
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**National  
Telecommunications &  
Information  
Administration**

## **Commerce's NTIA To Address Native American Leaders and To Seek Outreach Assistance in Indian Country**

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WASHINGTON — Lynn Chadwick, Program Officer for the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's (NTIA) Office of Telecommunications and Information Applications, will address Native American leaders at the Federal Communication Commission Indian Telecommunication Initiative from 7:30 a.m. to 9 a.m. on Thursday, July 17, 2008, at the Indian Walk-in Center, 120 West 1300 South Street, Salt Lake City, Utah.

NTIA recently provided leaders of the 563 Native American tribes and all Bureau of Indian Affairs superintendents and regional directors with consumer education materials about the TV Converter Box Coupon Program to help prepare tribes for the transition to digital television.

The materials included a letter from Meredith Baker, the Commerce Department's acting assistant secretary for communications and information, and acting administrator of the NTIA, encouraging tribal leaders to use their existing communications channels to help spread the word about the Coupon Program. Baker requested that tribal leaders "consider posting information in tribal buildings and schools, sponsoring a call-in, radio show about the digital transition, or holding information sessions with tribal elders."

The mailing includes a CD and a hardcopy of the TV Converter Box Coupon Program Partnership Toolkit with fact sheets, brochures, posters, and information on low-power and translator stations.

The outreach is part of NTIA's consumer education plan designed to inform vulnerable populations about the TV Converter Box Coupon Program and the digital TV transition. NTIA is working with 17 federal agencies and more than 270 organizations to inform the nation, especially minorities, elderly, disabled, economically disadvantaged and rural households about the digital television transition.

To date, nearly 20 million coupons have been requested and more than 5.5 million redeemed at more than 26,000 participating local, online and telephone retail locations.

## **Background:**

The Digital Television Transition and Public Safety Act of 2005 requires full-power television stations to cease analog broadcasts and switch to digital broadcasts after February 17, 2009. The Act also directed Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) to establish and administer the \$1.5 billion TV Converter Box Coupon Program, which is funded by the \$19 billion airwaves auction and not tax dollars.

The digital TV transition will offer consumers a clearer picture, more programming choices and free up the airwaves for better communications among emergency first responders and new telecommunications services.

By February 17, 2009, consumers need to look at each analog television set in their home that is not connected to cable, satellite, or other pay television service and make a decision:

- They may connect it to cable, satellite, or pay television service;
- They may replace it with a TV with a digital tuner, or
- They may keep it working with a TV converter box.

Some viewers watch programs by translators or other low-power stations which may continue broadcasting analog signals after February 17, 2009. Those viewers may wish to select a converter box that will pass through analog signals.

Households may request one or two coupons, which are worth \$40 each and can be used toward the purchase of up to two, digital-to-analog converter boxes. Between now and March 31, 2009, households may request two coupons while funding is available in one of four ways:

- Apply online at [www.dtv2009.gov](http://www.dtv2009.gov).
- Call the Coupon Program 24-hour hotline 1-888-DTV-2009 (1-888-388-2009)
- Hearing impaired may call 1-877-530-2634 (English/TTY) or 1-866-495-1161 (Spanish/TTY). TTY Service is available from 9 a.m. - 9 p.m. Eastern Time Monday through Friday
- Mail a coupon application to: PO BOX 2000, Portland, OR 97208-2000
- Fax a coupon application to 1-877-DTV-4ME2 (1-877-388-4632)

NTIA will provide consumers a list of eligible converters and participating retailers when coupons are mailed. By law, coupons expire 90 days after they are mailed, and only one coupon can be used to purchase each coupon-eligible converter box.

To learn more about the TV Converter Box Coupon Program, eligible converters and participating retailers, go to [www.dtv2009.gov](http://www.dtv2009.gov).

NTIA is responsible for the development of the domestic and international telecommunications policy of the Executive Branch.

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